

Mayor's Monthly Message: January 2022

As a community, we are growing and working hard at keeping Florence a great place to live, work, and play. I'm appreciative of the quality staff that helps us proceed with the direction communicated and documented in our many plans. It is a great feeling of pride to see these plans come to fruition. As always, there are great things happening in Florence, AZ. We have the best community and people!

We'll start off the New Year with an update on our Annual Citizen's Survey. On October 18, 2021, the Town Council approved the content of the Citizen Survey. Since then, Polco has been mailing postcards and letter to those who were randomly selected to participate in the survey. Now that we are further along in collecting data for the community survey, we are excited to invite the rest of the Florence community to participate. The open participation, communitywide online survey has been programmed on Polco and launched December 28. Here is the link: <https://polco.us/sfp8g2> The survey questions in the open participation survey are the same as in the sampled survey, but with two small updates. We added a map at the beginning and ask where the respondent lives, and at the very end, we added a question about where they heard about the survey, as this is very helpful for improving future communications. One important point about publicity for this survey if residents received a survey invitation in the mail, it is very important that they complete that version (and access the survey using the URL provided in the mailed materials) rather than responding to the open participation survey/link. Important note: It is standard setting for the open participation survey is to require that respondents provide their email address and zip code before they can submit their response. Polco includes language at the start of the survey explaining this requirement. Polco also ensures their confidentiality and privacy. Requiring registration ensures you only have one response per person and allows your community to start building a digital panel of residents who we can easily follow up with to post questions about initiatives or hot topic issues in our community.

Upcoming Events:

1/8	8-12	Farmers Market	Chamber of Commerce	McFarland State Park
1/21	5-8	3rd Friday	Chamber of Commerce	Historic Downtown Main Street
1/22	8-12	Farmers Market	Chamber of Commerce	McFarland State Park
1/04	5:30 to 7:30 p.m.	Los Pequeños	Recreation Division	Community Center
1/18-1/24	5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.	Iddie Biddie Kiddies	Recreation Division	Community Center
1/29	Saturday	Florence Makes a Difference Day	Recreation Division	Community Center

The Outstanding Employee Recognition Program Award recognizes Patricia (Trish) Buchanan for her outstanding contributions to our organization and celebrates these achievements with Trish, her coworkers, and her family. The following is what a co-worker had to say about Trish's contribution to the work environment.:

"The Employee of the Month is about recognition for those who go above and beyond the call of duty. I would like to share with you my interactions with Patricia (Trish) Buchanan. Ms.

Buchanan is an Administrative Assistant for the Town Clerk's Office and I hear she is one phenomenal employee. However, my connection with Trish comes outside of her normal duties and falls within community commitment. Approximately one year ago our food bank distribution partner (United) told us they would no longer be delivering Emergency Food Boxes to the Town of Florence as the need no longer existed. Understanding that losing this partnership would be detrimental to the Town, Trish was instrumental in gathering our Faith Based Partners and community members to strategize keeping the United commitment of food delivery to those in need. As part of this effort and a stipulation for continued food delivery, United said their folks would no longer be responsible for any aspects of the food distribution other than bringing food to a specified location—the Town of Florence would need to take over responsibility for distribution of food to the community. Trish was one of two that took the lead in receiving training on a mandatory database that tracks federal food allocation and is a major part of this program—no one else stepped up and without the completion of this training the food distribution would not be possible. Her energy did not stop there. She recognized that the slumping number of food recipients that United was reporting, did not support what she knew about our community. Trish was key in reaching out to multiple community resources to emphasize/advertise the use of the food bank. The first month of operation, we saw an increase of use from 40 minus to 60 plus—a direct result of Trish's involvement. She does not stand still; Trish was a standout in enthusiasm for receiving training on all aspects of the food distribution—now educated she knows how to run many of the positions needed for completing a food distribution—again one of only two people! Trish believes in this community and sacrifices for its benefit. She has been flawless in her effort—has not missed one food distribution event! Trish's singular efforts have help provide over 900 packages of food and service of 1000+ people in need. Should you have an opportunity to stop by the food bank on the last Friday of the month you will notice cars lined around the block ready to receive a food allocation. That line represents the need that Trish knew existed and made reality. Without her exemplary involvement our Town would have been left without a resource to provide food for those in need. Her effort in this program in addition to her normal duties, surely make her the standout for Employee of the Month!"

I would also like to acknowledge Leland Ray Hartzel for 20 years of service to the citizens of the Town of Florence and to celebrate the achievement with Ray and his family. Leland Ray Hartzel started his career with the Town in January 2002 as a Maintenance Worker with the Parks and Recreation Department. In July of 2005, Ray was promoted to Parks Maintenance Foreman, and in July of 2007, Ray accepted a promotion to Parks Superintendent. From March 2009 to March of 2014, Ray served as the Parks and Recreation Director. In 2014, he resumed his role as the Parks Superintendent and remains in this position. Ray enjoys serving the public and has been part of many wonderful events and programs that have taken place in and around the Town's parks. He has assisted in preparation for these events and helped to make them a success by making sure the park facilities and ground are well kept. Ray has taken pride in the achievements of the Community Services Department and is a valued member of the Florence team.

In addition to this monthly message, you can find all town council meeting agendas and minutes at: <http://www.florenceaz.gov/town-council/> and our regularly scheduled meetings are the first and third Mondays, at 6 pm, at Town Hall in Florence, AZ. As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out at Mayor@florenceaz.gov.

Sincerely,

Tara Walter
Mayor of Florence, AZ